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ORATORY

FOURTH EDITION

HAROLD FORD, M.A., LL.D., D.C.L.

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THE PRINCIPIA OF
PULPIT AND PLATFORM
ORATORY

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ORATORY

OR

Vocal Delivery on a Scientific Basis

AND ITS RELATION TO

‘Clerical Sore Throat’

BY

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PREACHING,’ ‘HAMLET : A NEW THEORY,’ ‘EVANGELIUM
IN EVANGELIO,’ ETC.

‘Est in dicendo etiam quidam cantus obscurior’

CICERO

FOURTH EDITION

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PREFACE

THE continued and largely-increasing demand for this book, together with the flattering reception accorded it at the hands of the Press, is my only justification for its re-issue.

Convinced of the supreme importance to a speaker of the Art of Breathing, as based on sound, scientific principles, I have embodied in this work a series of Breathing Exercises, which, if habitually practised, must prove beneficial, whether as applied to physical development, or to the training and preservation of the voice.

TADDINGTON RECTORY,
November, 1907.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

IN the exquisite perfection of the human voice we see the conception, not of a finite mind, but that of the Divine Artificer. For how complex yet perfect its organism ; how numerous and delicate its constituent parts ; yet, how sublime the harmony in which those parts are made to interact ! In design it is incomparably more beautiful, as it is more intricate, than anything the human mind ever projected. I cannot conceive a Diviner charm than that of using the powers of the voice. The gradations of sound, the shades of expression, the eloquence of passion, and all the

varied emotions of the soul, of which the voice is susceptible, are alike wonderful and illimitable, as well in sublimity as in their strange and bewitching power over the human mind and affections. And yet, what organ is there more abused than the voice?—and because abused, the pulpit and platform alike witness to repeated failures in the art of public speaking.

It is quite conceivable that an objection may arise in the minds of some against the word ‘oratory,’ as embodied in the title of this work, more particularly when applied to the purposes of the pulpit. By oratory, I do not mean an ostentatious display of natural or acquired vocal powers, far less do I mean an obvious artificiality which defeats its own purpose, but the most powerful and perfect expression of thought and feeling through the medium of oral language—Nature expressing herself in all

her varied moods and phases of thought and feeling with all the eloquence of which the tongue is susceptible.

As indicated by the word 'Principia,' I shall here confine myself to those first principles which underlie the art of vocal delivery, as an essential part of oratory, but which are practically ignored by the mass of public speakers, both clerical and lay, and yet which suffice of themselves to produce the most powerful effects in pulpit and platform oratory.

CHAPTER II

VOCAL DELIVERY

‘**D**ELIVERY,’ says Cicero, ‘has the sole and supreme power in oratory.’

It avails little or nothing that a sermon or a speech be brilliantly conceived, or that it be embodied in the most perfect form of literary expression, if the delivery be defective, for the effect of these is more or less nullified by a vicious delivery.

For instance, how many a sermon is lost to us, and its power for good neutralized ; how many a speech is rendered ineffective ; how often the incomparable beauty of the English Liturgy is marred, by a

defective mode of delivery, resulting from a want of knowledge of the very elements of true vocal emission !

Not sufficient attention has been bestowed upon the speaking voice in the oral expression of thought and feeling. And yet, is it not by the *spoken* word that the evangelization of the world is to be accomplished ?

The *written* word can never supersede the *spoken* utterance. There is a power and a potentiality in a living man and a living voice which is not possible in the unspoken word, nor, in a like degree, is possessed by anything else in the world, as a method of communicating thought and feeling.

Words *unspoken* are the mere skeleton, as it were, of speech ; but by the alchemy of the human voice they are at once transmuted into flesh and blood — real living words—palpitating with life because vitalized by the soul of the speaker.

By the persuasive power, passion, and pathos of the voice, the chords of the heart vibrate responsive to the lightest touch of the speaker's will.

Spirit reaches spirit through the *spoken* word more potently than is possible through the medium of the printed page.

A *speaker* has before him the whole realm of thought and feeling ; and his art consists in giving due interpretation to them, not only through the symbolism of words, but also through the tones and inflexions of the voice.

I am fully aware that there exists in the minds of some a strange prejudice against the art of public speaking, and more especially when applied to the purposes of the pulpit, as tending to make a speaker artificial or affected.

If it do this, it is due, not to the art itself, but to the false exponents of the

art, or to the artificiality of their systems.

What vitiates most systems of elocution is the attempt to teach men to speak by a specious system of musical notation—that is, by adapting one's voice in time, tone, and inflexion conformably to fixed rules, thus producing, or tending to produce, something of a speaking automaton, rather than an intelligent and natural speaker.

To be an impressive speaker, you must be intensely natural, studiously avoiding any approach to affectation or unreality in your mode of delivery. Nothing so weakens a speaker's, and particularly a preacher's, power of impressibility for good as unreality, for any departure from Nature involves a distinct loss of power. Nature will respond to Nature, but never to an affectation.

Notwithstanding, there are those who deem it not unnecessary to affect an intonation peculiarly characteristic of the particular sect of which they are the accredited exponents. Hence we hear an Oxford intonation, a Catholic intonation, an Evangelical intonation, a Wesleyan intonation, and so forth. Your hearers will be propitiated by reality, but instinctively repelled by anything which savours of the charlatan.

Therefore rigidly discard every semblance of conscious artificiality, cant, or mannerism. Be in earnest. Be transparently natural. There is an affinity between earnestness and naturalness. The latter can only be secured through the former.

Now, what constitutes a good vocal delivery? It is intensity of thought and feeling united to the power of forcible and elegant vocal expression, to acquire

which postulates the application of certain fundamental principles embodied in this work. Add to this a quick analysis of thought and sentiment, with the power of expression in oral language.

That power of oral expression is best attained by vocal interpretation, under intelligent guidance, of the 'thoughts and sentiments of others—that is, by reading or reciting aloud extracts from the best authors, and faithfully and accurately interpreting their meaning and spirit. This requires the exercise of a logical mind, high poetic feeling, and a ready sympathy with the beautiful and the emotional in prose and poetry.

Just as in *rhetoric*, by studying the various styles and compositions of others, we intuitively catch up something of the spirit and strength of their diction, so in the *art of speaking*, by constantly inter-

preting in voice and expression the language and sentiments of others, we acquire a natural, forcible habit or style of delivery, till by constant practice, what we have imitated in set and studied speech, will at length have become a habit or style incorporated into our own in spontaneous and original effusions.

CHAPTER III

THE ART OF BREATHING

THE process of speech, as a purely mechanical operation, is divided into three parts—viz.: First, the production of air by means of the lungs; next, the production of sound by means of the larynx; and, thirdly, the shaping of the sound into words by means of the mouth.

As to the first of these: of all the principles which underlie the art of vocal emission, none is of more paramount importance than that of *breathing aright*—that is, through the nostrils, and diaphragmatically.

To breathe for the purposes of life is

one thing ; to breathe for those of vocal emission is quite another. The former, comes to us instinctively ; the latter, is generally only acquired as the result of instruction.

Nature has been sufficiently generous to give to all her children that commonest of gifts—a nose, not merely for facial adornment or olfactory uses, but chiefly for the purpose of respiration.

It is a physiological fact that, quite apart from the purposes of speech, those enjoy the greatest immunity from throat and chest affections who habitually adopt the method of breathing through the nostrils.

The singular immunity of the native races of North and South America from diseases of the respiratory organs, has been attributed to the simple habit of breathing through the nose—a habit rigidly practised by them from earliest infancy.

De Quincey, in his 'Last Days of Kant,' tells us that 'the great German metaphysician always went out for a walk after dinner alone, partly that he might breathe exclusively *through his nostrils*, because the air, reaching the lungs in a state of less rawness, and at a temperature somewhat higher, would be less apt to irritate them.'

The so-called 'Clerical sore throat,' and other similar evils incident to public speakers, have been attributed primarily to the vicious mode of breathing or pumping the air through the open mouth, instead of breathing through the nostrils.

A vicious mode of breathing necessarily involves a vicious use of the voice. And it is this *wrongful* rather than its excessive use, that causes the functional derangement and physical disorder connoted by the term 'Clergyman's sore throat.'

The nose is Nature's respirator ; and the air in passing through the nostrils is both filtered and heated before it reaches the sensitive organs of the throat and chest. It is filtered by the hairs with which Nature has lined the nostrils, and which therefore catch up any impurities with which the air may be charged.

Its temperature, too, is raised by its having to traverse a longer and more circuitous route to the lungs, whereby we avoid the irritation which often provokes a cough, or induces other functional disorders.

The supreme importance of breathing through the nose, and not through the mouth, as based on physiological grounds, quite apart from the purposes of speech, has been very forcibly demonstrated by a medical authority, by a comparison of the two methods of breathing, thus :

THE MOUTH

Can be readily shut against air.

The teeth are injured and the tongue dried by the constant passage of air to and fro.

Has a straight wide passage to the larynx.

Thus admits currents of cold air direct to the lungs.

Freely admits all the filth of the streets, etc., suspended in the air as dust.

Allows all germs in the air to enter the throat and lungs.

Allows dry irritating air to enter the lungs.

Is not used for inspiration amongst savage tribes or animals.

THE NOSE

Cannot.

Has nothing that can be so injured.

Has tortuous and narrow passages.

Warms the air almost to blood heat before it enters the lungs.

By its projecting hairs filters the air as through a sieve, retaining all the dirt.

Acts as a germicide, and filters out the germs, so that none are found in air wholly breathed through the nose.

Moistens all air before it reaches the lungs.

Is always used for inspiration by all animals, except a certain proportion of civilized men.

Used for inspiration, and allowing cold, dirty, germ-laden air direct access to the delicate larynx and lungs, is the cause of the greater proportion of throat and lung affections, helps the decay of the teeth, and dries the tongue.

Used for breathing is the cause of snoring.

Used for inspiration, warming the air, and straining off germs and dirt through its tortuous passages, prevents many diseases of throat and lungs, acting as a natural respirator provided naturally for the purpose.

Used for breathing renders snoring impossible.*

Breathing through the nostrils, moreover, minimizes the amount of vocal exertion and consequent fatigue. The reason is obvious. If the air be drawn through the mouth, it absorbs the moisture in its passage, thereby rendering the palate, throat, and tongue dry and clammy, involving a resultant loss of vocal and physical power, which renders inevitable greater exertion and premature exhaustion.

* A. T. Schofield, M.D., M.R.C.S.

More especially does this apply to overcrowded and overheated rooms, conditions which make the mouth and throat particularly susceptible to dryness and irritation. The air, too, being more or less vitiated, is charged with impurities which, when drawn through the mouth, irritate the sensitive vocal organs, producing some temporary inconvenience, which is often aggravated by huskiness or a cough.

How often, too, after vocal exertion in overheated rooms, severe colds or other disorders supervene, which would have been avoided by breathing through 'Nature's respirator' when coming out into a much-reduced temperature !

This method of breathing is one of the best possible aids to long-sustained vocal efforts, without incurring any undue sense of fatigue.

Moreover, by its use we are able to dis-

pense with the conventional glass of water, or other meretricious aids, so frequently resorted to by speakers for the purpose of fortifying the exhausted organs, since the need of any such will have been removed.

Now, more air is expended in producing sound than is needed for ordinary breathing. In other words, the air taken in for the purposes of life is altogether insufficient for the purposes of public speaking.

What, therefore, is needed is a deep inflation. Why? Because, as is hereafter shown, it is necessary to introduce as much music as we can into our speech; and the more music there is, the greater is the expenditure of breath. Also, when dominated by any strong feeling or emotion, our speech is more or less vehement and passionate; and the more vehement and passionate it is, the greater is the expendi-

ture of breath. Consequently, we need a large supply, or a deep inflation.

How, then, shall we procure this large supply? By breathing diaphragmatically.

There are three types of breathing :

1. The abdominal or diaphragmatic.
2. The lateral or costal.
3. The clavicular or scapular.

In simpler terms these are respectively called :

1. Midriff breathing.
2. Rib breathing.
3. Collar-bone breathing.

The first is the natural type of respiration ; the other two the *unnatural* types. By the use of the unnatural types we use only a portion of our lungs—viz., the *upper* part.

Physiologists tell us that when we

breathe with the *upper* part of the lungs we take in but a third of the quantity of air they are capable of holding ; that this vicious mode of respiration is very prevalent, very injurious to health, and productive of chest disorders and of ‘ Clerical sore throat.’

That we may the better apprehend the meaning and importance of diaphragmatic breathing, let us first consider the shape and the action of the diaphragm.

The diaphragm, or midriff, is a muscular partition between the abdomen and lungs, in shape not unlike an inverted basin arching up into the chest—*i.e.*, when at rest.

In inhalation, this convexity descends and flattens, making more room above for the inflation of the lungs, and pressing out the walls of the abdomen.

When inspiration takes place by the descent of the diaphragm, the abdominal

motion is necessarily *outward*; but when by expanding the upper part of the chest, it is *inward*.

‘As the lungs inflate with the descent of the diaphragm, the inspiration, being prolonged, becomes lateral, and the ribs expand on all sides equally, but the shoulder-blades and collar-bones still remain fixed. If the inspiration be still further and unduly prolonged, it becomes clavicular, involving the inward movement of the abdominal muscles. But clavicular breathing is a vicious method, and to be avoided; by it the whole lower part of the chest is flattened and drawn in, instead of being distended; consequently, the lower or larger part of the lungs is not inflated.’ *

All inspiration should commence by the action of the abdominal muscles and the descent of the diaphragm—*i.e.*, by pushing forward the walls of the abdomen and chest.

* Plumptre.

In taking a deep inspiration, diaphragmatic breathing is supplemented by rib breathing, because by the descent of the diaphragm the lower and larger part of the lungs is inflated, thus expanding the ribs at the lower portion of the chest slightly, while the upper ribs remain practically undisturbed.

The combined forms of midriff and rib breathing are the right method of inspiration, while collar-bone breathing is absolutely wrong, and should never be made use of. The reasons for this are not far to seek. 'The lower part of each lung is large and broad, while the upper part is cone-shaped and very much smaller. It is self-evident, therefore, that by downward and sideways expansion (enlarging the *lower* part of the lungs) you will inhale a much greater quantity of air than by drawing up the collar-bones. This

consideration alone should suffice to prove the utter falseness of collar-bone (clavicular) breathing.*

In expiration, care must be taken that every particle of air given out be in the production of sound. Instantly the process of replenishing the lungs has ceased utterance should begin. Any breath given out silently *before* utterance commences, when the lungs are inflated for vocal action, is wasted, is 'something taken from the force, volume, and ease of utterance.'

Care must also be taken that no breath comes out *with* the sound. If breath be given out with it, we shall not only quickly expend the supply we have, but the voice will lose in purity of tone, and be made harsh and rough. Convert every atom of air into sound. Economize, but never exhaust the lungs. Always keep in store a reserve fund.

* Behnke.

CHAPTER IV

BREATHING EXERCISES

I. RECUMBENT POSITION.

TO test the diaphragmatic action in the natural type of abdominal breathing, lie down flat on your back, place one hand lightly upon the abdomen, and the other upon the lower ribs.

Now practise gentle respiration.

Observe how the hand will rise with the abdomen during inspiration, and fall during expiration.

Carefully avoid any movement of the shoulders, or extreme upper portion of the chest, which must be perfectly quiescent.

Now take the converse of this, in order

to prove the absolute futility of collar-bone breathing.

As you inhale, *press down* the soft abdominal walls instead of allowing them to expand, and you will feel that your lungs are only very partially filled (about a third), since the lower and larger part of them is not inflated by the descent of the diaphragm; for the latter is only possible by the distension of the abdominal muscles.

II. SITTING POSITION.

Take a chair. Sit on it astride, perfectly upright, with the shoulders well fixed, but not elevated. With your hands grasp firmly the sides of the seat.

Practise the same breathing as in Exercise I., paying strict attention to the expansion and retraction of the abdomen.

The object of grasping the chair with both hands is to render impossible the

elevation of the shoulders, and consequent collar-bone breathing.

Free respiration is, of course, impossible when sitting, but this exercise is given to simply enforce a fundamental principle in its application to public speaking, and to emphasize the absolute necessity of avoiding any movement of the collar-bones.

III. STANDING POSITION.

1. *Inspiration.*—Stand easily erect, with the shoulders well back, but not elevated. Place the hands at the side of the chest, on the lower ribs.

With the mouth firmly closed, draw in through the nose the greatest amount of air the lungs can comfortably hold, the abdominal muscles being kept as rigid as possible, but the lower part of the chest being fully expanded. Thus the whole of each lung is inflated. Do this slowly and

noiselessly. Let the stream of air be continuous, equal, and long.

The duration of the inspiration is the point to be attended to. At first, it may not last more than a very few seconds, but by practice it may be prolonged to several seconds in duration.

It were impossible to over-estimate the importance of this to a public speaker. Its accomplishment constitutes one of the secrets of success.

2. *Retention of Breath*.—After a full, deep inflation, hold the breath for several seconds before exhaling it.

Its retention increases the capacity of the lungs for becoming a 'reservoir.' And there must always be a good volume of air under the control of a speaker.

3. *Expiration*.—Having taken a deep inspiration, and retained it for several

seconds, then exhale or let it out regularly, continuously, and slowly.

As in inspiration, so in expiration, we must make it as long as possible.

The exhalation will at first last but a few seconds, but by practice we can gain the power to give out breath for the space of nearly half a minute.

4. *Whispering*.—To increase the breathing capacity of the lungs, and to acquire a greater facility in the correct management of the breath, an excellent practice is to speak in a strong, loud *whisper*. The expenditure of breath in whispering being considerably greater than that in speaking, we learn with greater facility to control both our inspiration and expiration.

5. *Vocalizing*.—The last exercise may be varied by emitting sounds.

Take any sound, but preferably the

vowel *a*, as in *father*. Sustain the note as long as possible without exhausting the lungs.

Instantly the lungs are filled for vocal action the sound should commence. In other words, the voice should begin at the very instant of expiration—at the very moment of impact of the air against the vocal bands.

Lastly, for free respiration during vocal exercise, it is essential that there be no constriction at the waist to interfere with the full play of the lungs ; the vest of the male, and the corsage of the female, should be sufficiently loose to admit of free abdominal respiration.

Any constriction at the waist interferes mechanically with free respiration, and impairs the vocal powers correspondingly.

CHAPTER V

THE MUSIC OF SPEECH

SPEECH, to be effective and agreeable, must be partially *sung*. Cicero, no mean authority on the subject, gives due recognition to this fact in the dictum, 'Est in dicendo etiam quidam cantus obscurior'—a truth which is attested by the experience of every successful speaker.

For we learn that if, when addressing a numerous assembly, our words are to reach our hearers in a form at once audible, intelligible, and agreeable, our utterance must be partially *musical*; and the more numerous our audience, and the larger the area over which our voice has to

travel, the more musical must that utterance be.

Our language is often reproached as harsh and rugged. This reproach had been deserved if cast, not upon the language, but on those who misinterpret and abuse it. If justice were but done to the vowel element in our language, it would not be found wanting in 'full beauty and melody of sound.'

Why is Italian pre-eminently the language of song? Chiefly, no doubt, because of the superabundance of vowels. Why is the speech of an Italian more euphonious than that of an average-speaking Englishman? Partly for the same reason, and partly, also, because his formation of the vowels is fuller, more perfect, and more sonorous than ours. He directs the waves of sound to the front of the mouth, we to the back part of the

throat and against the teeth ; hence the fascinating tones of the one, and the guttural, harsh, and unattractive sounds of the other.

The vowels are pre-eminently the *music* of speech, as the consonants are the *noises* ; and music will extend over, and be appreciable at, far greater distances than mere noise.

This fact is attested by the intuitive utilization of this penetrant power of music in the ‘Nature-prompted’ utterances of the street-crier, whose wish is to be heard as far and as effectively as possible.

‘Take care of the consonants, the vowels will take care of themselves,’ is an oft-repeated maxim. But in this, as in many other maxims of an antithetic character, the truth is sacrificed to the *forced* embodiment of a pointed antithesis.

The too common use of this false, per-

nicious rule of suppressing or ignoring the vowel element in oral language, is the direct cause, both of defective utterance, and that absence of charm without which speech were bereft of its power, beauty, and grace.

I grant that articulation becomes proportionately indistinct as the consonants are suppressed or imperfectly uttered ; that their sharp and distinct utterance is as essential a requisite for *intelligibility* as for the purposes of energetic and forcible speech. But why give the pre-eminence to those elements which have ‘no individual phonetic existence of their own,’ and practically ignore those upon whose formation is wholly dependent the production of sound and consequent *audibility*, as also the expression of the emotions ?

Despise the vowels, and you will at once divest speech of beauty as of expression.

They are the very 'flesh and blood' of speech, without which consonants are but dry bones—void of beauty as of life.

How important a part they play in oral language, is at once apparent when we remember that it is through the vowels alone that we can develop the voice in regard to its intensity, purity, or sweetness, equally in speech as in song ; that we can give expression to emotional feeling or passion ; that a speaker makes himself audible, and so in part intelligible ; and that, as the musical sounds of speech, they form the sole elements admitting of inflexion or modulation of voice.

Now, we English have contracted a habit which, in its influence, has marred the natural beauty of our language and shorn it of its own peculiar charm—viz., that of speaking too much with the teeth compressed. We thus 'reduce to a mini-

mum the sonority of the vowels,' impair the quality of voice, reduce its power, and lessen its extent of reach — effects which are the immediate result of our wholly disregarding the utility of the vowels.

If the sounds are to be emitted and sent forth so as to reach the distant auditor in a form at once clear, sonorous, intelligible, and agreeable, how otherwise than by separating the teeth sufficiently for them to have a free, open, and unobstructed passage? But if, from a too contracted opening of the mouth requisite for the full, perfect utterance of these sounds, they be impeded in their progress outward, they will be depressed, roughened, and made harsh by the resistance offered by the teeth. The tones will lose in those musical qualities of fullness, richness, sweetness, and clearness so essential to a speaker,

and which impart to speech its especial charm ; for the sounds produced will not be pure vowel-tone, but an admixture of *nasal* and other sounds equally wanting in euphony.

The voice must find emission through the mouth or nasal passages. The more purely it does this through the former, the more will it approximate to vowel-tone, and in proportion will be its purity, sweetness, and strength.

Our endeavour, therefore, must be to introduce into our speech as much music or vowel-tone as we can. This will suggest the expediency of separating the teeth to form perfectly the vowels, and of sustaining the voice upon them as long as is consistent with their just and perfect utterance, as also for the purposes of inflexion. At the same time, we must be careful of a prolongation into a drawling and sing-song

expression, depriving speech of its charm, dignity, and grace.

The consonants are the *noises*, as the vowels are the music, of speech. They form the bare and bony skeleton of speech; the vowels, its 'flesh and blood,' deprived of which the consonantal skeleton would possess neither vitality nor the moulded elegance of form, beauty, or variety. Notwithstanding the consonants form the very nerves and sinews from which are derived the energy, strength, and power of our language.

Proportionate to the prominence, or absence of these, is our distinctness, or indistinctness, of utterance. To obtain a graceful and withal forcible utterance, we must give individual attention to the vowel *and* consonantal elements whose combinations form words.

CHAPTER VI

AUDIBILITY AND INTELLIGIBILITY

A SPEAKER'S aim is primarily to be heard and understood.

Now, there is a very prevalent opinion, but false as it is prevalent, that the louder we speak the better we are understood.

To be heard is one thing ; to be understood is another. Audibility and intelligibility are not necessarily convertible terms ; for how often is a speaker heard and not understood ! For instance, it is not an uncommon thing to hear a man puffing and panting in the misdirected efforts of public speaking, and vociferating with a vehemence that quickly exhausts both himself

and his hearers, labouring under the vain delusion that what he is saying is perfectly intelligible to the minds of his hearers.

No doubt such efforts are an excellent specific for throwing off latent and superfluous energy, but for the purposes of speech absolutely useless ; for all that reaches his hearers is mere noise—*vox et præterea nil*.

A man may possess the voice of a Stentor, but it will avail him little if his enunciation be defective.

On the other hand, he who speaks barely above a whisper may be both heard and understood, and that, too, at a considerable distance, and with comparatively little effort, if only his enunciation be clear and distinct.

It is the clear, crisp articulation of words that renders a speaker intelligible, and constitutes that charm of speech which, in

its perfection, fascinates us with its spell of irresistible power.

To acquire a just and refined utterance of the elements of vocal language, no exercise will more subserve this end than that of speaking in a loud *whisper*, giving individual attention to the utterance of the elemental sounds of both vowels and consonants.

Take a book, or a newspaper, and read in a loud *whisper* to a friend at a distance of twenty yards or so, and see that your every word is distinctly and intelligibly heard by him, and with no more effort on his part than if you were reading aloud. To do this will necessitate an energetic pronunciation of the consonants, and a perfect utterance of the vowels, by the mouth assuming the requisite shapes for their due formation.

Of course, the recital of mere words,

dissociated from the ideas they represent, will have nothing of interest apart from the purpose of exercising the organs of articulation, and may even appear ludicrous ; but, as Dr. Hullah justly remarks, 'as assuredly no singing-voice ever yet was formed by the exclusive utterance of anything that could be called music, so no speaking-voice will ever yet be formed by the exclusive utterance of anything that can be called literature.'

CHAPTER VII

VOICE-CULTURE

THE voice is the speaker's chief instrument. As such, it needs training to render it equal to the demands which are made upon its powers. To this end, the following exercises on the vowels are given, that through them the powers of the voice may be developed in purity, flexibility, and strength. Thus the vocal mechanism will be first adapted to its work ; it will then readily seek to find for itself expression in the display of its powers.

THE VOWELS.

aa | *a* | *o* | *oo* | *ee*

The choice of the vowel *a*—pronounced, after the Italian, *ah*—as that on which the voice should be most frequently exercised,

is justified by the fact that, proceeding as it does from the central position of the mouth, whence the utmost resonance is emitted, it forms the richest vowel we have, and that on which, therefore, the voice should be most frequently exercised. The vowel *e*, incomparably the most difficult, is for this reason placed last.

1. *For Purity of Voice.*—Take a *deep* inspiration of breath, breathing diaphragmatically and through the nose, for reasons already assigned. Then, having ascertained the middle of your voice—that which is farthest from the two extremes of its compass—sing the vowels on notes nearest to that level, at varying degrees of intensity. Sustain them as long as possible. These long open vowels admit of being sustained by the voice almost indefinitely. This is an excellent exercise for improving the clearness of voice, and

imparting to it that *purity* of tone so essential to a successful speaker.

2. *For Flexibility of Voice*.—Having sustained these vowel sounds, now inflect the voice upon them, beginning with an interval of, say, a third, increasing the interval each time till you can carry the voice through a whole octave. Utter the vowel *a* as an exclamation, thus, ‘Ah !’ and in the same manner with the other sounds, inflecting the voice through varying intervals in the musical scale. This exercise will be found to impart to the voice that *flexibility* which displays itself in those undulations of the voice which, apart from their uses in accentuating the meaning of words, impart to speech a positive beauty and grace of utterance.

3. *For Strength of Voice*.—Than the following exercise, there is none more calculated to strengthen the voice. The two

preceding exercises will be found of incalculable service, but more beneficial than either is the following, especially if there be any tendency to weakness of voice.

From the explosiveness of its character, the French term it *coup de la glotte*, the shock of the glottis. It would be far less difficult to illustrate it *vivâ voce* than to represent it on paper. I cannot, however, do better than quote from so excellent an authority on such a subject as Signor Garcia.

‘Keep,’ he says, ‘the tongue relaxed and motionless, avert the base of the pillars, and render the whole throat supple. In this position breathe slowly and long. After being thus prepared, without stiffening either the larynx, or any other part of the body, calmly and with ease attack the tones, very nearly by a slight motion of the glottis, on the vowel *a* very clear ; this motion of the glottis is to be prepared

by closing it, which momentarily arrests and accumulates the air in this passage ; then, as suddenly as the pulling of the trigger, it must be opened by a loud and vigorous shock, like the action of the lips energetically pronouncing the letter *p*. This lesson should be insisted on, as it is the basis of all teaching. I again recommend the shock of the glottis as the only means of attaining the sounds purely and without bungling.'

Until this is attained there is no correct voice-production. Besides being a positive beauty in vocalizing, it gives power, volume, and ease of utterance. It is an undeniable preventive of 'Clerical sore throat,' since this explosive quality of voice argues the true adjustment of the parts of the voice. 'When the speaker,' says Sandlands, 'has accomplished this, he need have no more fear of "Clerical sore throat."' "

CHAPTER VIII

QUALITIES OF VOICE

TO describe in minute detail the anatomy of the human voice, would be to employ a terminology, as bewildering to the general reader as it would be useless to the ordinary speaker.

Suffice it, therefore, to state that the larynx, or organ of voice, is situated in the upper part of the windpipe.

It is an open tube, with a lid termed the epiglottis. Across the tube are stretched horizontally two elastic bands, called the vocal cords, which are the sound producers, or generators of the voice. The space between these vocal bands is commonly termed the glottis, but more cor-

rectly designated the space of the glottis, or glottic orifice.

The air emitted from the lungs by means of the windpipe, passing through the glottic orifice, sets up a vibration of the edges of the vocal bands, thereby producing sound. This sound, generated in the larynx, is modified in passing through a variable cavity, consisting in the pharynx (the cavity behind the tongue), mouth, and nose.

Now, there is one part of the mouth which requires particular description—that is, the soft palate, which is a very important factor in vocalization.

The hard palate is the roof of the mouth. The soft palate is a movable partition dependent from the back part of it, with the uvula hanging down in the centre.

By this movable partition, or curtain, the mouth or nose can be completely shut off from the throat.

To shut off the mouth from the throat, the soft palate is *lowered*, and rests closely upon the back part of the tongue.

To shut off the nose from the throat, the soft palate is *raised*, and pressed against the back part of the pharynx.

By *lowering* the soft palate, the mouth is shut off from the throat, thereby compelling the voice to pass through the nostrils, thus giving it a nasal quality. But nasality in a voice is a barbarism.

By *raising* the soft palate, the nose is shut off from the throat, thereby compelling the voice to pass through the mouth, producing pure vocal tone.

For the formation, therefore, of all pure vowel sounds, the soft palate must be raised, thereby closing the nasal cavities.

There is another quality of voice described as guttural, or 'throaty.'

This is due to the elevation of the base

of the tongue, and the contraction of the muscles of the throat, making the aperture through which the sound has to pass small, instead of broad and large. The voice is reflected in the throat, and sounds guttural.

Now, since the soft palate plays so important a part in the management of the voice, it is essential that we bring it under our complete control.

To accomplish this, take a hand-mirror, and so hold it as to throw the rays of light upon the back of the throat. Then breathe through the *nose*, and it will be seen that the soft palate will immediately drop upon the tongue.

Sing while it is in this position, and you will produce nasal tone.

Now breathe deep through the *mouth*, and the soft palate will rise.

Sing with the soft palate thus raised, and you will produce pure vocal tone.

Another very important point to be observed in the correct production of voice is what is termed 'attack of tone.' It is explosive in character. To attain it, the breath, when inhaled, should be momentarily retained before striking the note, which should be attacked gently, yet with precision.

It may be recognized by a sensible vibration in the throat about the region of the larynx. 'This is a great beauty in vocalizing, and a source as much of ease and power as of grace.'

Thus, then, the voice, to be pure, resonant, and far-reaching, must be produced with the open throat—that is, with the soft palate well up, and with a proper method of attack, the tone coming well to the front of the mouth, the impact being against the hard palate, just above the front teeth.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHEST VOICE

TO the bewilderment of the inexpert we are sometimes told that we have four voices. We will confine ourselves to the two popularly called the 'head voice,' and the 'chest voice.' Strictly speaking, there is neither. The voice can only be generated in the larynx. But in the one case the 'sounding-board' seems to be the head, and in the other the chest, hence the appellations 'head voice' and 'chest voice.'

'It is as natural,' says Hullah, 'to sing or to speak "from the head" as "from the chest"; but to use either mode *exclusively*

is attended with great inconvenience, and even some danger, and is therefore assuredly *unnatural*. Yet this, it is certain, is what the majority of English people do. Not only so ; for the most part they use all but exclusively that one of the two which is least fitted to do the most work—the second register, or “head voice,” which, from its comparative feebleness and limited extent, would seem to have been provided by nature only as a supplement or relief to, because a change from, the first.’*

Now, the chest portion of the register, which, as a matter of pitch, is applied to a greater or less number of the lowest notes of the voice, is the proper one to use, particularly for the purpose of public speaking. In fact, to speak most effectively, most easily, and for the longest

* ‘The Speaking Voice.’

time, is only possible to him who speaks with the so-called 'chest voice'—that is, with a fully-inflated chest—so that a firm, forceful, and copious stream of air may play upon the vocal bands, producing those rich, round, sonorous tones so essential in public reading or speaking. Another point to be observed is this, that the *middle* of the voice be oftenest used—that is, that which is farthest from its extremes of compass. 'This,' says Hullah, whether of speaker or singer, is that part of the voice most often to be called into requisition, and therefore most important.'

When our tones of voice are such that the chest is felt to vibrate under the impact of the sound-waves, then we are using the voice in the most agreeable and economic manner.

To speak from the chest, it is an essential requisite that we speak with a *full* chest—

that is, by adopting the *abdominal* type of respiration. And it will be found that the rich, reverberative tones of voice which characterize the skilful speaker, can only be produced by the abdominal type of breathing, and by using the chest portion of the register.

‘Let your notes,’ says the Rev. F. B. Meyer, ‘come as far as possible from the *chest*. The notes which the chest gives are much deeper, more reverberant, and more touching than any other.’*

‘The chest voice is louder,’ says Holyoake, ‘and lasts longer. Both actors and singers inflate the chest to deepen, strengthen, and prolong the tones.’†

But there are times when, with advantage to ourselves and to our hearers, we may legitimately use the ‘head voice’ as a relief to the ‘chest voice.’

* ‘Hints for Lay Preachers.’

† ‘Public Speaking and Debate.’

This change, too, from the lower register to the higher, and *vice versa*, is sometimes dictated by the character of our utterances, and is generally known as modulation, or the change from one key-tone to another, or from one level of speech to another. When judiciously used, it constitutes one of the chief charms of oratory.

A beautiful illustration of the effect produced by this modulation of voice may be found in 'Portia's Speech on Mercy.' By modulating the voice in the twelfth line to a lower level of speech, and adopting a mode of utterance approaching a monotone, a positive beauty and depth of meaning is imparted to the climax of thought which, with the same effect, could not in any other way be expressed.

CHAPTER X

PHRASING, OR WORD-GROUPING

A SPEAKER'S chief aim is to be intelligible to his hearers. Nothing, perhaps, more conduces to this end than the logical division of sentences marking the relation of clause to clause, and of sentence to sentence, by a system of phrasing, or word-grouping.

This is a system which, by well-regulated rests, determines for us where to breathe without creating a breach in the continuity or progress of the sense. It is almost the first great postulate to intelligent reading aloud.

Without such a system, the speaker must

totter and stumble through every long and involved sentence, with pain to himself and his auditors ; *with* its aid, his movements will have all the smoothness and regularity of elegance and ease. Not only so, but when dictated by the logical meaning and construction of sentences, as it should be, it becomes a powerful means for the development of sense. Thus, then, its purpose is twofold : both for securing to us a just economy of the breath, by enabling us to replenish the lungs without interrupting the continuity of sense, and for throwing out into bolder relief the meaning of sentences, which, from the inadequacy of *grammatical* punctuation for the purposes of the speaker, is oftentimes left indeterminate and obscure.

To illustrate what I mean, take the following sentence, in which there would

be found no *grammatical* pauses marked in the book :

‘Nothing can be more prejudicial to the great interests of a nation than an unsettled and varying policy which cannot be calculated on from day to day.’

The reader will be fully sensible of a felt want of something here, both for his own ease in delivery, and to assist the hearer to understand what otherwise would be a little short of an unintelligible jargon of words thrown promiscuously together, without mark or division of sense or relation of parts.

Read aloud the same sentence, pausing where indicated, and it will at once be perceived how all obscurity will disappear, by the aid of a system which has for its basis the logical analysis of thought and language :

‘Nothing can be more prejudicial—to the great interests of a nation—than an

unsettled and varying policy—which cannot be calculated on—from day to day.’

These pauses are not, of course, of equal duration. Some of them are scarcely appreciable, being of very short duration.

The reader must be guided solely by his own intelligence and sense of propriety. Our wish is to show the value and necessity of a punctuation other than grammatical, viz., that which is called *rhetorical* punctuation. The grammatical pauses are wholly insufficient for a speaker. They enable the writer to convey his meaning to the silent *reader*, but do not enable the reader to convey his meaning to the listening *hearer*. Hence rhetorical punctuation, or word-grouping, steps in to our aid.

From the nature of our language, rhetorical punctuation must necessarily be to some extent arbitrary. We cannot, therefore, lay down a fixed code of rules which

shall infallibly apply in every case, but the principle once thoroughly grasped, the speaker's own intelligence will then determine for him both the frequency and duration of his punctuation.

RULES FOR RHETORICAL PAUSES.

Rule I.—Pause after the nominative or subjective phrase—*e.g.*,

The fashion of this world—passeth
away.

To act virtuously—is to act wisely.

Rule II.—When by inversion the predicate precedes the subject, pause after the predicate—*e.g.*,

Dark and drear—was the lonesome
wild.

Sufficient for the day—was the evil
thereof.

Rule III.—In every case of inversion, pause after the first inverted phrase—*e.g.*,

Brief and few—were the words he
spoke.

To faith—add virtue.

Rule IV.—Pause before the infinitive mood—*e.g.*,

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind—to
suffer the slings and arrows of
outrageous fortune.

We are called upon—to assist our
fellow-creatures.

Rule V.—Pause before a preposition when it introduces a *complete* clause or phrase, but not when it occurs in the body of a clause or phrase—*e.g.*,

A man he was—to all the country
dear,
And passing rich—on forty pounds a
year.

Rule VI.—Pause before a relative pronoun—*e.g.*,

He jests at scars—that never felt a
wound.

Such are the errors—which you must
avoid.

Rule VII.—In an elliptical sentence pause where the ellipsis occurs—*e.g.*,

To our faith we should add virtue ;
and to virtue—knowledge ; and to
knowledge—temperance ; and to
temperance—patience.

Rule VIII.—Pause after an emphatic
word of force—*e.g.*,

And Nathan said to David : Thou—
art the man.
Cicero—was the greatest orator of
ancient Rome.

Rule IX.—Pause before a conjunction
when used *disjunctively*, but not when it
is used *conjunctively*—*e.g.*,

Honour in youth—and happiness in
age reward integrity of conduct.
A virtuous life conduces to peace and
happiness.

Rule X.—Pause before and after an
intermediate, explanatory, or parenthetical
clause—*e.g.*,

Beauty—like a flower—soon fades
away.

Her little bird—a poor slight thing
the pressure of a finger might
have crushed—was stirring nimbly
in its cage.

Rule XI.—Pause immediately after the
objective case when its governing verb
follows—*e.g.*,

Our harps—we left by Babel's streams.
The nightly visits to my chamber—
made.

Rule XII.—Pause before adverbs of
time and place—*e.g.*,

Men fail in nothing which they boldly
undertake — when sustained by
virtuous purpose.
Oh, few shall part — where many
meet.

The foregoing rules will be applied to
'The Psalm of Life,' and 'Portia's Speech,'
which will be found at the beginning of
the Appendix.

CHAPTER XI

THE POETIC STYLE OF DELIVERY

THE selection of pieces in the Appendix has, for the most part, been made with a view to the formation of the *poetic* style of delivery.

Where the diction is above that of ordinary prose, the style of delivery must be exalted and dignified—*i.e.*, elevated to the level of the author's composition.

The differences of style will be sufficiently obvious by contrasting 'The Dying Christian to his Soul,' and 'Hamlet's Advice to the Players.' In the one, the tones of voice to be adopted are those of ordinary commonplace speech ; in the

other, the rich, swelling tones of voice befitting all lofty, imaginative composition.

What characterizes this poetic style of delivery is that the voice is full in volume, deep in pitch, and its dignity of character is marked by lengthening the *quantity* of the indefinite syllables—*i.e.*, by prolonging the vowel sounds. It is sometimes called the ‘orotund voice,’ from *ore rotundo*, because the mouth assumes a rotund form, as in the pronunciation of the tonic *o* in ‘old,’ ‘roll,’ etc., thereby making the tones round, swelling, and sonorous. The art is to preserve this same quality of voice in passages when other tonic sounds than that of *o* prevail.

In Scripture-reading, and in prayer, the orotund is specially appropriate, as imparting depth and solemnity, and as powerfully expressive of reverential feeling.

Take, for instance, the following sublime and majestic utterances of Isaiah, and the sentence from the Litany, and it will be at once felt how wholly inappropriate would be the familiar tone of commonplace conversation or narration :

‘Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.’

‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’

‘O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us miserable sinners.’

On the other hand, while aspiring to dignity and power, we must studiously avoid a style approaching the nature of bombast or turgidity.

CHAPTER XII

THE SOUL OF ORATORY

ORATORY consists in two parts, body and soul, corresponding to the dual constitution of man. The soul is the centre of man's personality—the man himself; the body is man's medium of communication with the outer world. In true oratory it is the man himself who is speaking—*i.e.*, the soul giving expression to thought and feeling through the medium of the body in articulate language. Thought and feeling, generated in the mind and heart, find their expression in the symbolism of words through the tones, accents, and modulations of the human

voice. The voice, then, is the speaker's chief instrument. Now, a speaker may be perfect mechanically, but there is an absence of something which at once characterizes the true artist. For instance, he may have a most cultivated voice, perfectly musical in quality, and so flexible that at the least impulse of the will he can with ease sweep through the various intervals of the musical gamut. He may have a faultlessly pure pronunciation and articulation, and may so use and husband his breath that he seems to have an exhaustless supply. Yet withal there is something wanting.

What is it which we feel to be absent? It is nerve-force, 'verve,' the *soul* of oratory, that which gives warmth and vitality to words. An automaton might be made to speak, but it could not impart warmth of feeling, emotional expression

to words. Only man, possessing a human soul, has power to express in articulate language the subtle feelings of the soul ; and it is the art of a speaker to breathe into his words the breath of life, in order to make them real, living words, palpitating with life because vitalized by the soul of the speaker. This nerve-force, or soul of oratory, is inborn ; and as no one is devoid of a soul, so no one is incapable of expressing feeling and emotion, though not in the same degree. Temperaments differ. A nervous, sympathetic temperament, for instance, is capable of expressing deeper feelings than an unsympathetic and phlegmatic one.

Now, the amount of nerve-force which a speaker infuses into his discourse is commensurate with his conception of ideas he wishes to express. That conception of idea depends upon his mental powers ;

that is to say, it is through the mind that the soul is stimulated or excited, displaying itself in the nerve-force of a speaker.

It is summed up in the words of the psalmist: 'My heart was hot within me, and while I was thus musing the fire kindled, and at last I spake with my tongue.' While 'musing'—there is the process of reflection, the mental operation; 'the fire kindled'—*i.e.*, the soul was stimulated or excited; then the 'tongue spake' with an eloquence all aglow with the warmth of the fire within.

By what process, then, may a speaker infuse this nerve-force into the body of oratory? By stimulating the imagination, by forming a right and vivid conception of ideas, and by making them so intensely real to himself that his hearers must needs feel their reality.

'The poetic or sympathetic temperament

that can vividly conceive and realize the various passions, feelings, and emotions expressed by an author, and in the "mind's eye" beholds all the scenes and circumstances in which the language of such emotions either really was, or is supposed to have been, uttered, will ever possess the strongest power of influencing the hearts of others; and nothing will enhance this power so much as the culture of the imagination.*

* Plumptre.

SHORT APPENDIX OF PIECES FOR PRACTICE

THE PSALM OF LIFE

(LONGFELLOW)

TELL me not—in mournful numbers—
‘Life—is but an empty dream !’

For the soul—is dead—that slumbers—and things
are not—what they seem.

Life is real—life is earnest—and the grave—is
not its goal :

‘Dust thou art—to dust returnest’—was not
spoken—of the soul.

Not enjoyment—and not sorrow—is our destined
end—or way ;

But to act—that each to-morrow—find us farther
—than to-day.

Art is long—and time is fleeting—and our hearts
—though stout and brave,

Still—like muffled drums—are beating—funeral
marches—to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle—in the bivouac
of life,

Be not like dumb—driven cattle—be a hero—in
the strife !

Trust no Future—howe'er pleasant—let the dead
past—bury its dead !

Act—act—in the living present—heart within—
and God o'erhead !

Lives of great men—all remind us—we can make
our lives sublime ;

And—departing—leave behind us—footprints—
on the sands of time ;—

Footprints—that perhaps another—sailing—o'er
life's solemn main,

A forlorn—and shipwrecked brother—seeing—
shall take heart again.

Let us then—be up—and doing—with a heart—
for any fate ;

Still achieving—still pursuing—learn—to labour
—and to wait !

PORTIA'S SPEECH ON MERCY

(SHAKESPEARE)

The quality of mercy—is not strained ;
It droppeth—as the gentle rain—from heaven,
Upon the place beneath : it is twice blessed ;
It blesseth him—that gives, and him—that takes :
'Tis mightiest—in the mightiest ; it becomes
The thronèd monarch—better than his crown ;
His sceptre—shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute—to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit—the dread and fear of kings.
But mercy—is above this sceptred sway :
It is enthronèd—in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute—to God Himself,
And earthly power—doth then show likest God's
When mercy—seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice—be thy plea, consider this—
That in the course of justice, none of us—
Should see salvation ; we do pray for mercy :
And that same prayer—doth teach us all—to
render
The deeds of mercy.

THE DYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS SOUL

(POPE)

Vital spark of heav'nly flame !
Quit, oh quit this mortal frame :
Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying,
Oh, the pain, the bliss of dying !
Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

Hark ! they whisper ; angels say,
'Sister spirit, come away !'
What is this absorbs me quite ?
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirit, draws my breath ?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death ?

The world recedes ; it disappears !
Heav'n opens on my eyes ! my ears
With sounds seraphic ring :
Lend, lend your wings ! I mount ! I fly !
O grave ! where is thy victory ?
O death ! where is thy sting ?

HAMLET'S ADVICE TO THE PLAYERS

(SHAKESPEARE)

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue : but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand—thus ; but use all gently ; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious, periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise : I would have such a fellow whipped for o’erdoing Termagant ; it out-herods Herod : pray you, avoid it.

Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor : suit the action to the word, the word to the action ; with this special observance that you o’erstep not the modesty of nature ; for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as ’twere, the

mirror up to nature ; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.

CATO ON IMMORTALITY

(ADDISON)

It must be so ! Plato, thou reasonest well :
Else whence this fond desire, this pleasing hope,
This longing after immortality ?
Oh, whence this secret dread, and inward horror
Of falling into nought ? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and shudders at destruction ?
'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us ;
'Tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man !
Eternity ! thou pleasing, dreadful thought !
Through what variety of untried being,
Through what new forms and changes must we
pass ?
The wide, the unbounded prospect lies before
me ;
But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it !

HAMLET ON A FUTURE STATE

(SHAKESPEARE)

To be, or not to be : that is the question :
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them ? To die : to sleep ;
No more ; and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep :
To sleep : perchance to dream : ay, there's the
rub ;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may
come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause : there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life ;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of
time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's con-
tumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,

When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.

THE DEATH OF LITTLE NELL

(DICKENS)

She was dead. No sleep so beautiful and calm, so free from trace of pain, so fair to look upon. She seemed a creature fresh from the hand of God, and waiting for the breath of life; not one who had lived and suffered death. Her couch was dressed with here and there some winter berries and green leaves, gathered in a spot she had been used to favour. 'When I die, put near

me something that has loved the light, and had the sky above it always.' These were her words. She was dead. Dear, gentle, patient, noble Nell was dead. Her little bird—a poor, slight thing, the pressure of a finger would have crushed—was stirring nimbly in its cage; and the strong heart of its child mistress was 'mute and motionless for ever.' Where were the traces of her early cares, her sufferings and fatigues? All gone. Sorrow was, indeed, dead in her; but peace and perfect happiness were born—imaged in her tranquil beauty and profound repose.

MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

(COWPER)

Oh, that those lips had language! Life has
pass'd
With me but roughly since I heard thee last;
Those lips are thine—thine own sweet smile I
see,
The same, that oft in childhood solac'd me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say:
'Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!'
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes,
(Blest be the art that can immortalize—

The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it), here shines on me still the
same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here !
Who bidd'st me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long.
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own :
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream that thou art she.
My Mother ! when I learn'd that thou wast
dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, Life's journey just begun ?
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss,
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile ! it answers—yes.
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nurs'ry window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu.
But, was it such ? It was. Where thou art
gone

Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown :
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more !
Thy maidens, griev'd themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return,
What ardently I wish'd I long believ'd,
And, disappointed still, was still deceiv'd.
By expectation ev'ry day beguiled,
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learn'd at last submission to my lot ;
But though I less deplor'd thee, ne'er forgot.



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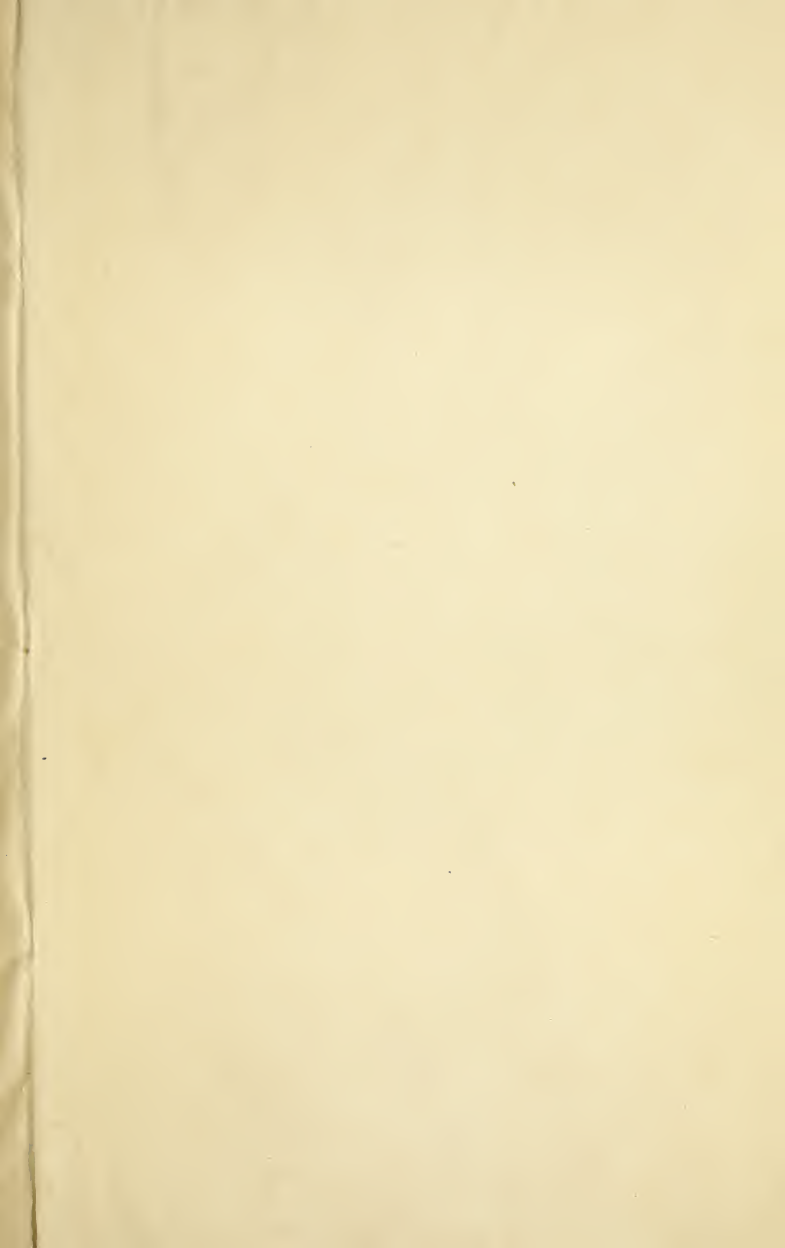
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